

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6975

INFO AMCONSUL UDORN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA, TH

SUBJECT: LAO REFUGEES IN THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 10679 B. BANGKOK 12230

SUMMARY: WE REMAIN EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE LAO REFUGEES IN THAILAND. WE URGENTLY NEED PAROLE AUTHORITY TO ASSIST THOSE LAO WHO WANT TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES. WE ALSO REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMEND TO UNHCR THAT MATERIAL ASSISTANCE BE PROVIDED TO LAO REFUGEES NOW IN THAILAND. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATE/UDORN CONTINUE TO RECEIVE URGENT REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM FORMER LAO OFFICIALS AND LAO EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. IN THE PAST TWO DAYS, FOR EXAMPLE, FORMER MINISTERS HOUMPHANH SAIGNASITH, KHAMKING SOUVANLASAY AND SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK HAVE MADE PERSONAL APPEALS TO THE AMBASSADOR ON BEHALF OF THE LAO REFUGEES.

2. SISOUK ESTIMATES THAT THERE WILL BE TOTAL OF 20,000 LAO REFUGEES INCLUDING MEO AND BLACK THAI IN THAILAND WHEN THE FINAL HEAD COUNT IS TAKEN.

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(SISOUK DID NOT SEEM AWARE THAT THERE ARE ALREADY

SOME 23,000 MEO IN COUNTRY.) OF THESE REFUGEES FROM LAOS, A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER, PROBABLY LESS THAN 1500 AND VIRTUALLY ALL ETHNIC LAO, WILL SEEK RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. SOME WILL GO TO FRANCE. MANY HOPE TO RESETTLE IN THAILAND. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A CLEAR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THE MANY LAO WHO HAVE BEEN OUR CLOSE ASSOCIATES OVER THE YEARS. WE BEAR UNQUESTIONABLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LAO WHO WORKED FOR US. WE THEREFORE WOULD LIKE TO AGAIN URGE THAT ALL POSSIBLE EFFORT BE MADE TO GIVE THIS EMBASSY PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR LAO. WE WOULD APPRECIATE A STATUS REPORT ON WHERE WE STAND WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND CONGRESS IN THIS REGARD.

3. A SECOND ASPECT OF THE LAO REFUGEE PROBLEM WHICH IS QUITE DISTURBING IS THAT THEY ARE NOT RECEIVING ANY SIGNIFICANT MATERIAL ASSISTANCE. UNHCR, WHICH HAS STARTED A PROGRAM TO HELP DESTITUTE VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THE BANGKOK AREA, HAS TAKEN NO ACTION ON THE LAO PROBLEM. THE AMBASSADOR BROU TZKOSV REPRESENTATIVE IN BANGKOK, ON JULY 1. KADRY PROMISED TO RAISE THE QUESTION WITH HIS HEADQUARTERS. WE SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT PUSH UNHCR ON DOING SOMETHAIN FOR THE LAO.

4. THE LAO REFUGEE PLIGHT BECOMES MORE SERIOUS EACH DAY. WE MUST ACT WITH SPEED TO MEET OUR RESPONSIBILITY.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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